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INFO RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
RHMFIUU/US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAORD/BICE ASAC JFK NEW YORK NY  
RHMFIUU/HQ BICE WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC

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DEPT FOR EUR/PPD AND EUR/NB; CA/VO/P AND CA/VO/F/P  
COPENHAGEN FOR DHS RICHARD KLUGMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ICELAND DEMANDS APOLOGY IN DETENTION CASE

11. THE AMBASSADOR WAS CALLED IN BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS GISLADOTTIR ON DECEMBER 13 TO HEAR ICELANDIC CONCERNS REGARDING THE CASE OF ERLA OSK ARNARDOTTIR, WHO WAS DETAINED BY U.S. IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES FOR ALMOST 24 HOURS FOLLOWING HER ARRIVAL AT JFK AIRPORT DECEMBER 9 (SEPTEL). SAYING SHE HAD SPOKEN AT LENGTH TO MS. ARNARDOTTIR EARLIER TODAY, GISLADOTTIR SAID SHE WAS SHOCKED BY WHAT SHE SAID WAS THE GROSSLY INAPPROPRIATE TREATMENT OF MS. ARNARDOTTIR BY U.S. IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES. THE MINISTER DESCRIBED MS. ARNARDOTTIR'S EXPERIENCE, WHICH REPORTEDLY INCLUDED CONFINEMENT, ISOLATION, AND BEING HAULED IN SHACKLES AND HANDCUFFS THROUGH PUBLIC AREAS OF JFK, AS INHUMANE AND DEGRADING. SHE SAID THE EXPERIENCE HAD LEFT MS. ARNARDOTTIR HUMILIATED AND OUTRAGED.

12. THE FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED THAT THE CASE HAS GENERATED WIDE INTEREST ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THE ICELANDIC PUBLIC IS BOTH APPALLED AND ANGRY. THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FLOODED WITH PHONE CALLS AND E-MAILS FROM CITIZENS PROTESTING THIS PARTICULAR CASE OR REGISTERING COMPLAINTS OF THEIR OWN ABOUT PROBLEMS CROSSING THE U.S. BORDER. GISLADOTTIR WARNED THAT THE DAMAGE TO THE U.S. PUBLIC IMAGE WAS SEVERE. SHE SAID AN OFFICIAL APOLOGY FROM THE USG WAS DUE.

13. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT THE U.S. WELCOMES MILLIONS OF GUESTS A YEAR AND WE TAKE IT SERIOUSLY WHEN VISITORS TO OUR COUNTRY REPORT THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN TREATED APPROPRIATELY BY U.S. OFFICIALS. SHE SAID THE EMBASSY HAS ALREADY RAISED THE CASE WITH THE U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION AUTHORITIES AT THE AIRPORT, AS WELL AS WITH DHS HEADQUARTERS. WE HAVE ASKED CBP FOR A FULL REPORT OF MS. ARNARDOTTIR'S DETENTION. THE AMBASSADOR ASSURED THE FORMIN THAT WE WOULD INFORM THE GOI OF THE RESULTS OF THE INQUIRY.

14. THE FOREIGN MINISTER WELCOMED THE INVESTIGATION, WHICH SHE HOPED WOULD BE CONCLUDED SWIFTLY. SHE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE INVESTIGATION SHOWED THAT MS. ARNARDOTTIR HAD IN FACT BEEN HANDLED ACCORDING TO THE CBP'S STANDARD POLICY, THEN IT WAS HER GOVERNMENT'S OPINION THAT THE U.S. BORDER PROTOCOL RAISED TROUBLING QUESTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE. GISLADOTTIR SAID THE GOI TOOK THE POSITION THAT THE TREATMENT OF MS. ARNARDOTTIR, WHOSE OFFENSE WAS UNWITTING AND WHO POSED NO DANGER TO THE U.S., SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE SAME AS THAT OF A DANGEROUS CRIMINAL.

15. EMBASSY COMMENT: GISLADOTTIR, WHO HAS PUT HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE TOP OF THE MFA'S ACTION LIST, WAS CLEARLY BOTH PERTURBED AND ENGAGED. (NOTE: SHE TOLD THE PRESS JUST PRIOR TO THE MEETING THAT SHE WOULD ASK FOR AN APOLOGY; SHE ALSO MET WITH THE PRESS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MEETING.) WE SHARE HER ASSESSMENT THAT THIS INCIDENT --REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENED -- IS A SERIOUS BLOW TO THE U.S. IMAGE IN ICELAND. HEAVY PUBLICITY HAS ENSURED THE CASE IS THE TALK OF THE COUNTRY. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE GET THE STORY OFF THE FRONT PAGES BY SORTING OUT THE DETAILS OF THE DETENTION AND

REPORTING BACK TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.  
THE FOREIGN MINISTER AS WELL AS THE PRIME MINISTER ARE PERSONALLY  
INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO LET IT SLIDE.

VAN VOORST